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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [AU](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN RESPONSE: DEMARCHING THE EU IN ADVANCE OF
THE MARCH 5-6 GAERC

REF: STATE 23592

Classified By: Acting Economic-Political Counselor Phillip R. Nelson
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On February 28, Acting EconPol Counselor delivered reftel paper to Andreas Riecken, the MFA's European Correspondent. Riecken commented on the following issues:

¶2. (C) WESTERN BALKANS: Riecken welcomed the recent decision to extend the mandate of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia. However, he stated that this should be the last extension, with Bosnia taking on more responsibilities by the end of the mandate in June 2008. Riecken said that the German Presidency did not plan an in-depth discussion of Serbia or Kosovo at the GAERC. Riecken agreed that the U.S. and EU must strongly support the Ahtisaari timeline and recommendations.

¶3. (C) ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUES: Riecken said that there would be no Council Conclusions on this issue. The EU would not change its current policy of support for the Quartet Principles. According to Riecken, the EU is cautiously awaiting the formation of the new national unity government.

¶4. (C) IRAN: Acting EconPol Counselor welcomed the EU's steps to implement UNSCR 1737, urging Austria to support additional measures beyond UNSCR 1737 in the face of Iran's flagrant non-compliance with UN and IAEA resolutions. Riecken acknowledged that within the EU there was a camp that favored "casting a wide net" and a second camp that insisted on staying within the confines of UNSCR 1737. According to Riecken, Austria does not want Iran to be able to portray the dispute as "Iran versus the West." To ensure that the conflict remains "Iran versus the international community," it is vital that the UNSCR remain united. Therefore, Austria supports implementation within the limits of the resolution.

¶5. (C) SUDAN/DAFUR: Riecken said that there is general agreement that the EU should continue to fund the AU Mission in Sudan beyond the end of March. However, it might be difficult to identify sufficient funding. One possibility is to transfer funds from the EU's development assistance budget for Sudan to support the AU Mission. Riecken agreed that the international community needed to increase pressure on Sudanese President Bashir.

¶6. (C) UZBEKISTAN: Riecken maintained that the EU would not lift sanctions on Uzbekistan until it demonstrated more significant progress on human rights issues. He agreed that the GoU had been more cooperative in certain areas. Riecken opined that the EU sanctions may have played a role in the GoU's willingness to engage with the West.

¶7. (C) UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: Riecken said there are no plans to discuss the UN Human Rights Council at the GAERC. Austria shares the U.S. frustration with the council's ineffectiveness. Riecken added the challenge is to identify

and implement concrete measures to improve the council.

18. (C) AFGHANISTAN: Riecken said that Austria welcomes the EU's decision to deploy police trainers in Afghanistan. However, the GoA's emphasis remains the Balkans. It therefore plans to make a "substantial contribution" to an anticipated ESDP police trainer mission in Kosovo. Riecken did not rule out Austrian participation in the Afghanistan mission, but with the Kosovo mission as a priority, "there may not be much left over for Afghanistan."

McCaw